

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05 /101 W
-----125228 181415Z /43

R 170537Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4268
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 4288

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: SREF
SUBJ: FEEDBACK FROM REFUGEES CONCERNING CONDITIONS/RECENT
EVENTS IN VIET-NAM

1. FOLLOWING IS INFORMATION OFFERED REF:OPS PERSONNEL BY
REFUGEES DURING EMB/ENS TOUR OF MALAYSIAN BOAT CAMPS APRIL
15 - MAY 15, 1978.

2. BAC LIEU (NOW CALLED MINH HAI): REGARDING COLLECTIVIZATION
OF DELTA LANDS, THE SRV IS NOT YET INVOLVED IN WHOLESALE COLLECT-
IVIZATION. AT PRESENT, THE GOVERNMENT IS PRACTICING A POLICY
OF REMOVING FARM PRODUCE FROM MORE PRODUCTIVE REGIONS TO POORER
ONES. THUS, THE EMPHASIS OF POLICU SEEMS TO BE MORE A REGIONAL
ONE THAN ONE CONCENTRATING ON INDIVIDUALS (THOUGH, OF COURSE,
THE GOODS IN THE WEALTHIER REGIONS MUST BE COLLECTED FROM
INDIVIDUALS). PERSONS FROM WHOM GOODS ARE COLLECTED ARE GIVEN
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RECEIPTS FOR THEIR LOSSES, WHICH ARE GENERALLY WORTH SO MUCH
IN FOOD TO BE COLLECTED AT AN UNSPECIFIED LATER DATE. SOME
FARMERS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN MAKING CLAIMS ON THEIR RECEIPTS.
ALSO, MOST TRACTORS AND BUFFALO HAVE BEEN NATIONALIZED.

3. PHU QUOC: BEGINNING IN EARLY APRIL, LOCAL CADRE BEGAN ASSAY-
ING WHAT JOB SKILLS WERE REPRESENTED IN THE AREA. PERSONS OF

WORKING AGE WERE REQUIRED TO COMPLETE A FORM INDICATING WHICH SKILLS THEY POSSESS AND THE DEGREE OF THEIR CAPABILITY IN PERFORMING THOSE SKILLS. THOUGH NO OFFICIAL STATEMENTS HAVE BEEN MADE REGARDING THE RATIONALE FOR THIS, IT IS ASSUMED BY REFUGEES TO BE BEGINNING OF OVERALL FORCED LABOR PROGRAM FOR THE ISLAND.

4. NATIONALIZATION OF BOATS AT PHU QUOC HAS NOT YET OCCURRED, THOUGH OFFICIALS HAVE STATED THAT SUCH NATIONALIZATION IS INEVITABLE. TWO PHU QUOC FISHERMEN SAID THAT LOWER LEVEL CADRES WERE SAYING THAT NATIONALIZATION OF THE FISHING FLEET WOULD OCCUR AT END OF THIS MONTH.

5. CAMAU: CAMAU IS QUICKLY BECOMING THE MOST POPULAR ESCAPE POINT FOR SAIGONESE. AS CAMAU HAS NUMEROUS EXITS TO THE SEA, MAY OF WHICH ARE VERY SMALL AND UNGUARDED, IT IS SAID TO BE EASIER TO ESCAPE FROM THE AREA UNDETECTED. APPARENTLY, LARGE COASTAL AREAS, SUCH AS RACH GIA OR PHAN THIET, ARE NOW MORE CAREFULLY GUARDED AND ARE NOTED FOR THEIR HIGH INCIDENCE OF UNSUCCESSFUL ESCAPE ATTEMPTS. ONE FISHERMAN FROM RACH GIA VENTURED TO SAY AS MANY AS 70 PERCENT OF THOSE ESCAPING FROM THAT CITY WERE APPREHENDED BY LOCAL SECURITY FORCES.

6. SAIGONESE LEAVING FROM CAMAU CLAIM THE TRIP TO CAMAU FROM SAIGON IS QUITE A SIMPLE ONE. TRAVEL DOCUMENTS, FAKE OF COURSE, CAN BE EASILY PROCURED IN SAIGON FOR \$15 - \$50. PAPERS PERMIT TRAVEL TO COASTAL AREA.
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7. SAIGON: AUDITING, WHICH BEGAN ON 23 MARCH, SEEMS TO BE STILL IN PROGRESS, YET ON A DIMINISHING SCALE. PERSONS ARE BEGINNING TO BE TRANSPORTED TO NEW ECONOMIC ZONES AS A RESULT OF THE 23 MARCH MASS AUDIT.

8. ONEY CHANGE: EARLIER THIS MONTH, THERE WAS A NATIONAL CURRENCY CHANGE. FAMILIES IN SAIGON WERE LIMITED TO \$500 AND THOSE IN RURAL AREAS TO \$150 - \$300. (ONE SAIGONESE STATED THAT \$500 IS ADEQUATE FOR BUYING 10 KG OF SUGAR ON THE BLACK MARKET.) THERE IS NO CONSENSUS ON THE EFFECTS OF THE MONEY CHANGE. COMMENT: IT IS FELT THAT CHANGE WILL HAVE LITTLE DIMINISHING EFFECT ON THE REFUGEE OUTFLOW AS 1) PERSONS WITH GOLD CAN BUY THEIR WAY OUT OF VIETNAM AND 2) THE NEW CURRENCY, IT IS SAID, CAN ALREADY BE PURCHASED, IN EXCHANGE FOR GOLD ON BLACK MARKET.
MILLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEES, ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978KUALA04288
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780209-0682
Format: TEL
From: KUALA LUMPUR
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780550/aaaabqgg.tel
Line Count: 112
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 15253e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2668509
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FEEDBACK FROM REFUGEES CONCERNING CONDITIONS/RECENT EVENTS IN VIET-NAM
TAGS: SREF, VM
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/15253e9c-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014